

# SOLDIER – FARMER – HISTORIAN

AN ALBUM OF TRIBUTES

TO

## HENRY FRANCIS BOYLE OAM

1919 – 2005



*Harry Boyle at ease on the verandah of Berry House, one of the Eales family homes at Duckenfield near Morpeth, NSW. Hunter Valley pioneer John Eales and the Eales Dynasty were among Harry's favourite research subjects.*

Published by

PATERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

with financial assistance from Maitland Mutual Building Society Limited

Val Johnson, 2006

# **HARRY BOYLE OAM**

1919-2005

## **AN ALBUM OF TRIBUTES**

In this tribute members  
of Paterson Historical Society wish to record  
their appreciation of the wonderful times enjoyed  
with their dear friend Harry Boyle and their gratitude  
for the contribution made by him to the achievements  
of the Society and the Paterson Museum

PATERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC  
PATERSON – NSW - 2421

**Acknowledgements:-** Paterson Historical Society acknowledges with thanks the contribution to this publication made by Newcastle Regional Library (Local History), Maitland Mutual Building Society Limited and Geoff Seccombe, Geoff Boyle, Margaret Sivyer, Peter Fenton, Thelma Bogan *Maitland Mercury*, *Newcastle Herald* and members of the Paterson Historical Society

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Published by - Paterson Historical Society Inc., Court House Museum, Paterson, 2421  
Cover and research – Val Anderson and Jack Sullivan  
Word processing – Shirley Threlfo  
Editing - Cynthia Hunter  
Printed by Keith Rudkin – The Copy Centre, Newcastle

ISBN – 0 9758491 2 3

Cover photo – Harry Boyle on the verandah at Berry House in 2002, taken by Bill Anderson  
Since Paterson Historical Society's inception in 1974 Harry participated in outings to historic homes and properties throughout the Hunter Valley. The background sketches by Val Anderson are some of the many homesteads visited

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## A Tribute by Cameron Archer

President, Paterson Historical Society  
Principal, Tocal College  
Director, Tocal Agricultural Centre

I was fortunate to have known and worked with Harry on local history for over 25 years. Harry also took a great interest in activities at Tocal and was particularly involved with the Paterson Historical Society. With his great gifts of communication and knowledge, Harry was an inspiration and mentor to me and many others. He had the capacity to tell a good yarn and engage his audience. His amazing grasp of the history of the Lower Hunter was second to none but this was balanced with an understanding of wider world history.

Harry was a self-taught self-educated man who read widely and had the ability to remember facts, figures and events.

Harry was one of the first local historians I met who was able to weave the indigenous history of the area into his stories. He kept a file on this history of the Lower Hunter long before anyone else and he always stressed the importance of our indigenous history.

As Harry had spent most of his life farming he had an outstanding grasp of agriculture and the rural economy. We therefore had much in common – both having backgrounds on family farms. Harry's career in farming mirrored so many other post-war farming families. Harry, however, was probably more successful than many others.

Harry was very active in the politics of our rural industries through the formative years of the Hunter's modern dairy industry and a number of other organizations. Harry and Sid Reynolds of *Old Duninald* in Paterson were instrumental in setting up a cooperative for farmers to reduce the costs of farm supplies. The dairy cooperative eventually stepped in and took over this role – a service that was provided for many years. It was Harry and Sid's energies and foresight that prompted these changes. Harry showed his enterprising spirit as a farmer, a community member and as a local historian.

People naturally warmed to Harry's good humour and friendliness. He was often found yarning to an absolute stranger at an event or official occasion. He would always stretch out a hand of friendship and support those in need.

This *Album of Tributes* to Harry is fitting and demonstrates the esteem in which he was held by those in the community and those who worked with him for many years. I am privileged to have the opportunity to write my own tribute and to record just a few thoughts about Harry.

*Cameron Archer*

## **A Tribute by Pauline Clements**

Secretary, Paterson Historical Society

How many times over the past thirty or more years have we turned to Harry Boyle to supply information, confirm a date or verify an item in question? Countless times, and he was always ready to help and we were never disappointed with the result. If he didn't have the information at his fingertips or find it quickly, there would soon be a return phone call or a letter in the post the day after. As fledgling authors and historians this help was invaluable and very much appreciated.

All areas of the Hunter Valley came to Harry's attention and many times his wide knowledge would fill the gaps and bring to light long forgotten details to make a story so much more readable. Anyone who has ever tried to research old newspapers now placed on microfilm in libraries will know what a time consuming job it is and the strain the eyes suffer, but Harry spent many hours on this task, searching out details of the day-to-day lives of the residents in earlier generations, or finding names of long forgotten families in overgrown grave yards and linking them to today's researchers.

Harry had a great interest in any item to do with Paterson and it was his suggestion that the Dorothea Mackellar connection with this area be investigated. When the society executive commenced a detailed search many connections came to light and formed the basis of the book and exhibition on Dorothea Mackellar's life – one of the most popular and sought-after exhibits in the Museum.

His researches into the early settlement of the Hunter Valley and of the Maitland area in particular were recognised in 1993 when he was made a Freeman of the City of Maitland and there was previous recognition of his work when he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 1986 - both awards well deserved.

Harry will be remembered for many things by his friends in our society - his quiet personality, the great wisdom of the country man he was and above all the generous spirit he showed (just prior to his death) in passing to the society all the material pertaining to Paterson, which he had accumulated over his long years of research.

*Pauline Clements*

## A Tribute by Cynthia Hunter

Member, Paterson Historical Society

In 1986 Harry Boyle received the Order of Australia Medal for service to the community in the field of local history. This was a well-earned award as there are few people in the Hunter Valley who have given to others so much of their time, learning, experience and enthusiasm for their chosen subject. An example of this generosity is that in 1996 Harry Boyle made available to all researchers his personal 'Index'. This Index is the unfinished outcome of about thirty years spent searching for and recording past happenings that determined historical events that have shaped the Lower Hunter district.

Harry Boyle was born in 1919. He first attended school at St Joseph's East Maitland. Some years later Harry's father moved to Muswellbrook where he established a timber mill. The late 1920s were years of severe economical depression during which time the timber mill venture was unsuccessful. Harry continued his schooling at Muswellbrook until the family returned to East Maitland. He attended secondary school at Marist Brothers West Maitland.

By Harry's own account, his early interest in and love for the stories of the past did not come from schooling. It came from the time he spent with his grandmother who was born at Millers Forest in the 1850s. During the years of his youth spent in the Maitland district it was one of Harry's responsibilities to be a companion to his grandmother. In return for the companionship of her grandson this elderly lady told the young man the stories of her life and the lives of her parents who came as emigrants to New South Wales from Ireland and after a decade of work were able to secure a farm at Millers Forest. Harry's grandmother knew all the early settlers of the district and their farms, and the riverboats and their crews. She had lived through the events that had shaped the farming districts to what they were at that time. Harry would recall with affection the influence of his grandmother in instilling into his life a love for historical knowledge and a historic sense of time and place.

At age fourteen Harry left school. His search for employment took him North where he tried droving, cane cutting and other work that came his way. He returned home upon the death of his father. He joined the railway department at the age of eighteen years. Shortly afterwards World War Two was declared. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1939 but was not called up immediately because his particular employment in the railway department was considered essential. Later he succeeded in enlisting in the Australia Imperial Forces where he became a member of one of the 'Z' Force Units.

After the war Harry took up a 50-acre farm at Swan Reach and established a home and family. His introduction to dairy farming in the Lower Hunter was the serious flood of 1949 and a few years later the devastating flood of 1955. Undaunted, he enlarged his farm and set about building up one of the top Friesian Studs in Australia.

Harry was now living among the rural community of the lower Hunter. He was an attentive listener to the oral histories and folklore of all his neighbours, many of whom were descendants of the earliest farmers and settlers of the district. The diversity of opinions about the past that he gleaned from his acquaintances prompted him to seek substantiated answers. To find them he turned to books, libraries,

archives, photographs and any other means to find the best evidence for whatever questions came his way.

Meanwhile he became increasingly involved in community work. He was the last flood boat captain for the area before the Natural Emergency Service (the forerunner of the SES) took over the work. He devoted time to the local schools. He served as State representative for the Dairy Farmers Association and President of the Australian Friesian Cattle Society. For ten years he wrote a column for a rural newspaper. Although he had little time to pursue history seriously during these years the foundation was laid for an extraordinarily extensive local knowledge.

Harry sold his Friesian herd in 1972 and retired from dairying but continued on the farm raising beef cattle. The less demanding lifestyle enabled him to devote more time to his interest. To this end he was a foundation member of the historical societies of Maitland and Raymond Terrace and served as President of the latter society for a term.

Harry was a close friend of the late Allan Wood, author of *Dawn in the Valley*. From Allan he received the advice, which directed his pursuit of history – take what you hear only as a guide, then check it at the most reliable source you can find. The late Stan Parkes was another influential friend with whom Harry shared historical information and ideas.

An additional interest in photography brought Harry into friendship with another photographer and history enthusiast, Jack Sullivan. Together they travelled through the region, particularly the Paterson and Allyn Valleys, searching for historic places and scenes, which they recorded.

Although as time passed Harry's field of inquiry became wider and wider, he was quick to acknowledge that the communities of Morpeth, Maitland, Hinton, Singleton and the Paterson and Allyn Valleys had interested him most.

In the early 1970s he began systematically to read nineteenth century newspapers in particular the *Maitland Mercury* but also the *Hunter River Gazette*, the *Morpeth Times*, the earlier *Sydney Gazette*, *Australian Monitor*, *Sydney (Morning) Herald*, other papers that were established at regional towns in the Valley and Sydney-based journals. The list is numerous. For many years Harry was a regular Monday traveller to Sydney where his day was spent at the State or Mitchell Libraries, the State Archives, the Land Titles Office and anywhere else that held archives or documents that shed more light on particular events of the past that were of interest to him, or his many friends who had asked for his help.

Harry Boyle always shared the fruits of his searches with those who asked him questions. He enlivened the travels of countless visitors to the Hunter Valley with stories of its past. He talked at meetings, functions and schools and lectured for the WEA and U3A courses. You would find him most Tuesday evenings at Newcastle's Local Studies Library where his friendliness and willingness to help other researchers could take up more of his time than he spent with microfilms, maps or books attending to his own inquiries.

Harry's *Index*, mentioned above, is an index of his own researches, his personal historical interests. But this is an interest so encompassing that it overlaps many other people's interests and so is a valuable tool to anyone in search of the history of past people, places and events in the Hunter Valley. The writer remembers Harry's first modest group of wooden twin filing drawers. As the number of cards increased, so too

did the drawers until he secured a particularly large set, which formerly held a library catalogue. How quickly did these drawers fill! At the time of copying to fiche in 1996, there were 29,640 cards. Newcastle Local Studies Library will copy Harry's cards, assembled from 1996 to 2005, onto a supplementary microfiche index in the future.

Harry Boyle contributed many historical articles to the *Maitland Mercury* over many years, such as the 'The Way We Were' series, as well as articles to historical society journals and newsletters. He delivered historical addresses, some of which have been printed as monographs including *William Munnings Arnold (1819-1875)*, *Lieutenant Commander Frederick Bedwell RN (1796-1853)*, *George Boyle White (1802-1876)*, and *A Synopsis of the History of the Paterson River Valley*, illustrated by Val Anderson. These four were published by Paterson Historical Society of which he was a Life Member. Harry also contributed chapters to commemorative publications such as *A New History of Maitland* published by Maitland City Council in 1983.

The Order of Australia Medal for service to the community in the field of local history could not have been awarded to a more deserving recipient. Harry was proud of the OAM and also proud of another honour bestowed upon him in 1993 – Freeman of the City of Maitland.

#### *Cynthia Hunter*

This tribute to the life of Harry Boyle has been adapted and updated from the Introduction by Cynthia Hunter to the original Microfiche index prepared by Newcastle Library in 1996



Harry and Elsie Boyle, photo by courtesy of Geoff Boyle

## A Tribute by Geoff Seccombe

General Manager Maitland Mutual Building Society

The Maitland Mutual Building Society Limited was approached to assist a 'Financial Literacy' educational programme developed by East Maitland Public School teacher Mr Steve O'Mara, which was starting to take on with other local primary schools.

Our task was to be the Reserve Bank and provide a common currency to assist the students and schools to trade amongst themselves - a currency called 'the mutual'.

In designing the currency we then went about determining whom we should pictorially immortalise on the face of the notes.

Harry Boyle who appears on our M5 (five mutual note) was a man by his example to others in our community we could not go past.

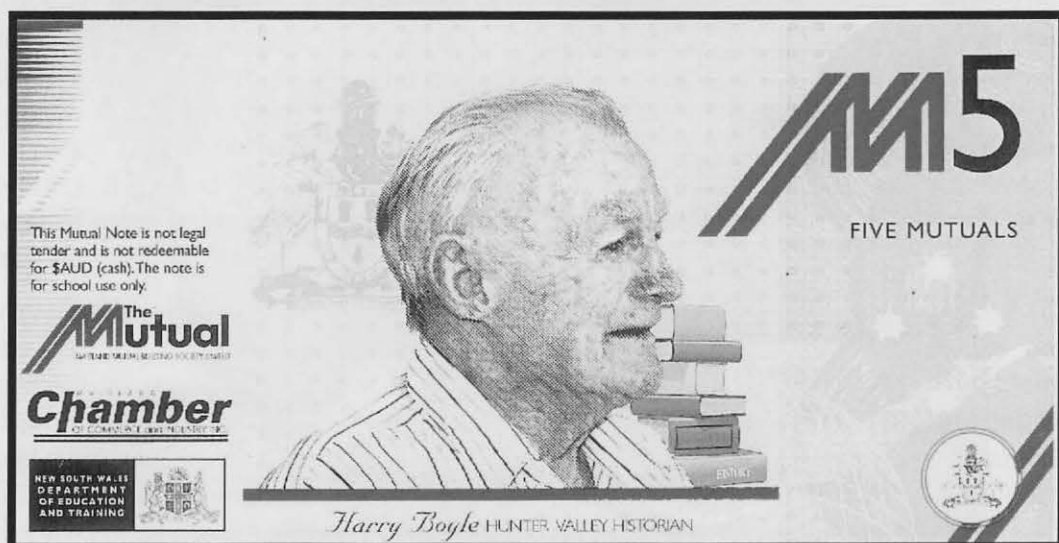
We believed that by putting Harry on our five mutual note, the enquiring minds of our youth and the question they would ask, would assist their understanding of the importance of community and its history as well as the importance of being credible and ethical in all we as individuals undertake to do.

As always Harry was a modest man and permitted our Society to include him in the work we were undertaking.

To us Harry epitomised a simple, hardworking ethical life brings you a very full life that's contribution becomes the aspiration of others.

Harry knew what we thought of him and now he is gone that window of time with Harry is so much more valued, as we know money/currency is only one measure of value and in life there are other very important values.

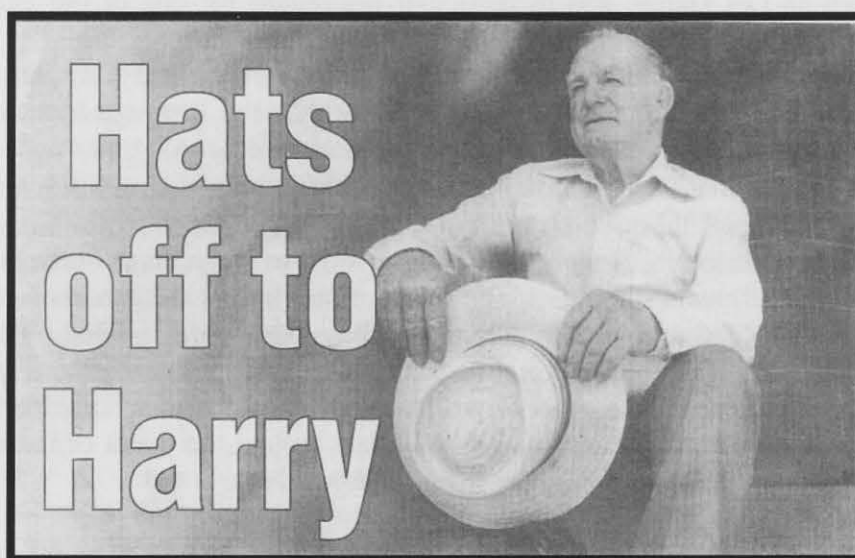
*Geoff Seccombe*



Paterson Historical Society acknowledges with thanks the contribution made by Maitland Mutual Building Society and Geoff Seccombe towards this publication

## Tributes from the *Maitland Mercury*

The death of Harry Boyle occurred on Monday 28 November 2005. The *Maitland Mercury* Tuesday 29 November 2005 featured a full front-page photo of and tribute to Harry by journalist Emma Swain. An abridged version of this tribute is reproduced here by courtesy of the *Maitland Mercury*



Harry Boyle has turned the final page on his own life's history.

At 86 years of age, the well-known historian, farmer, husband, father, grandfather, returned soldier and friend has died taking with him a wealth of knowledge both about life and the city he loved.

Mr Boyle, OAM, died at 3.45 am yesterday following a short battle with a terminal illness. He bid his final farewell at his Wallalong home with his family by his side.

'Up until the very end Dad was so independent and on Friday he spoke to me and told me what he wanted us to do with all the history he had researched and collected over the years ... he was very particular about that,' Mr Boyle's son, Geoff, said.

'But that was Dad. He loved his history and he certainly loved the history of Maitland.' Born in his grandfather's house in William Street, East Maitland, Mr Boyle also fondly known as Mr History – was the fifth of 12 children and his passion for history began at four years of age while sitting on his grandmother's knee.

'Dad said he had a clear memory of being with his grandmother and listening to the stories she told him about the colonial days and the wonderful adventures she had experienced.' Mr Boyle's daughter, Elizabeth Foy, said.

'I think, from then on, history became his passion.'

Mr Boyle's obsession with the past also earned him a string of awards including the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 1986 and the highly prestigious Premier's Award in 1993.

But it was his Freeman of the City accolade in 1993 that Mr Boyle most cherished.

Maitland Mayor Peter Blackmore said the city's flag would fly at half-mast in Mr Boyle's honour.

'Harry was one in a million and he will never be replaced,' Cr Blackmore said.

'I thoroughly enjoyed his columns in the *Maitland Mercury* and there will never be another Harry Boyle.'

## HARRY BOYLE HISTORIAN AND FRIEND TO MAITLAND

Margaret Sivyer wrote this tribute, which was published in the *Maitland Mercury* 29 November 2005 and is here reproduced by courtesy of Margaret and the *Mercury*.

The poem on this page to me epitomizes the man who has given so freely and generously of his time and interest to further the knowledge and history of our country in time of war, disaster, the Hunter area and, of course, the personalities such as Les Darcy, and in particular his regard for one of our early pioneers, Molly Morgan.

In my years as the foundation director of the Maitland City Art Gallery, we recorded the history of our city particularly in the Heritage Month exhibitions, the Centenary of Federation, the Bicentenary and Les Darcy.

None of this would have been possible without a major contribution in photographic and research support from Mr Boyle.

These photographic records are a legacy now in the gallery for the community.

The highlight of the week for many of us has also been the articles in the *Maitland Mercury* written by him, which will come out in book form in 2006.

Mr Boyle is acknowledged in so many books written on the history and people of our region but the other unwritten story is of a man who helped so many to learn a little more about their family background, an event or the region – this information was always given freely and generously.

The hospitality of his home through his late wife Elsie was another gift and memory to those of us who visited and complimented his extraordinary research, knowledge and memory - a gift to us all.

This poem, written by David McNicholl in Syria in 1941 was a poem Harry told me that he had in his research records since 1945. The poem appeared in his article published in the *Maitland Mercury* on Friday 10 June 2005 entitled 'Bloody battle cements Australia's bravery as desert fighters'.

*Build me no monument should my turn come,  
Please do not weep for me and waste your tears,  
Write not my name on honour rolls of fame  
To crumble with man's memory through the years.  
Wear no dark clothes, speak in no saddened voice  
Seeking rare virtues which did not exist  
Just let me lie under the cool sweet earth  
And sleep in peace, where I will not be missed.  
I ask one thing. That in still far off days  
Someone who knew me should in their daily round  
Suddenly pause, caught by some slight or sound,  
Some glance, some phrase, some trick of memory's ways  
Which brings me to his mind. Then I shall wait  
Eager with hope; perhaps to hear 'how great  
If he were with us still'. Then, at the end,  
All that I wish for – Just; 'he was my friend'*

## **Tributes from the *Newcastle Herald***

The *Newcastle Herald* was also generous in their tributes to the life and work of Harry Boyle and Paterson Historical Society is grateful to the *Herald* for permission to reproduce several news items included here, for which copyright to the *Herald* is acknowledged. Harry's death was announced on 29 November 2005 in an article 'Harry passes peacefully into history's pages'. An editorial on 3 December 2005 'Vale Harry Boyle' is reproduced below.

### **VALE HARRY BOYLE**

Not many people win as much love and respect in their lifetime as Freeman of the City of Maitland, Harry Boyle OAM, Mr Boyle was a true gentleman in the traditional Australian style.

Tough and self-reliant, honest, dependable and modest, Mr Boyle was a man of many facets. His deep love of the Maitland district and its history produced a legacy of research and scholarship that will benefit the Hunter for years to come. Harry Boyle died as he lived, with courage and grace, an example to all who were fortunate enough to know him. Reprinted with permission of the *Newcastle Herald* ©2006

On 3 December 2005 the *Herald* also featured a two-page tribute by journalist Greg Ray that focused on Harry's experiences in World War Two, in the Z-force unit operating in New Guinea. In this issue Harry's contribution to a special magazine *Maitland: 60 years a City*, which was published on 5 December 2005, was acknowledged thus:

### **INVALUABLE SOURCE**

As one of Maitland's most respected amateur historians, Harry Boyle graciously agreed to help *The Herald* in the preparation and checking of its special magazine *Maitland: 60 years a City*, which will be published on Monday. Despite his illness, he generously shared his knowledge and expertise. The magazine was one of the last things Mr Boyle was able to read in the days before his death and his comments on the work were received with enormous gratitude. Reprinted with permission of the *Newcastle Herald* ©2006

Harry's funeral service was held in St Joseph's Catholic Church East Maitland on Friday 2 December 2005. The following tribute appeared in the *Newcastle Herald* 3 December 2005 and is reproduced here with permission.

### **HARRY'S STORY APPLAUDED, WITH TEARS**

From misty-eyed old diggers to politicians and bearded bikies, people from all walks of life came to farewell Harry Boyle.

An estimated 700 people packed St Joseph's Catholic Church and grounds at East Maitland yesterday for the funeral of a man who probably knew more about Maitland's history than anybody.

Henry Francis Boyle (Harry) died earlier this week at 86 after a short battle with cancer.

He researched Maitland identities such as pioneer convict landholder Molly Morgan and prize-fighter Les Darcy.

His tireless work earned him an Order of Australia, and Maitland declared him a Freeman of the City.

Yesterday's ceremony was filled with laughter, tears and applause.

'We have come to honour one of our finest storytellers,' parish priest Father Brian Mascord said.

'Harry told stories to help us remember, but today we are here to tell Harry's story.'

Two of Mr Boyle's children, Geoffrey Boyle and Elizabeth Foy, said their father was born at East Maitland on May 3, 1919 and attended Maitland Marist Brothers.

He worked at East Maitland railway station and planted the jacaranda trees that can still be seen at the nearby underpass.

During a recruitment drive, he joined the Australian Infantry Forces and shortly after met Elsie, whom he married in 1941.

After the war, Mr Boyle was a bread carter, dairy farmer and he had an interest in greyhounds.

'After that, he devoted most of his time to his love of history,' Mr Boyle said.

'When mum died, he missed her and when he was diagnosed with cancer he said he'd had a good life and was ready to go.'

Mr Boyle said his father advised his children to 'remember your past so you can build for the future but enjoy the present.'

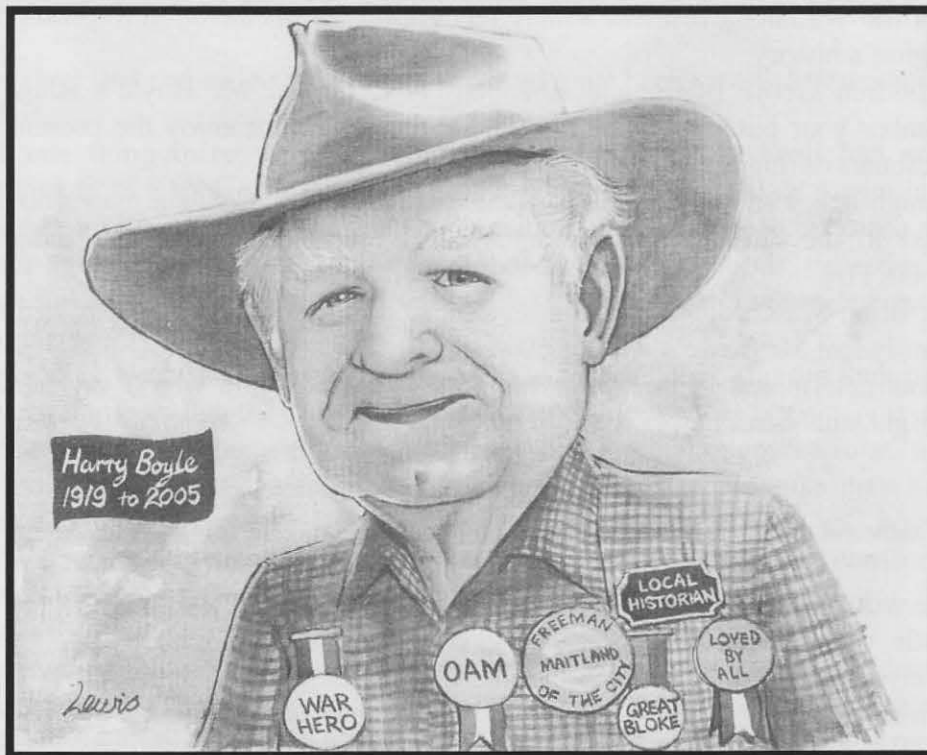
Mate and author Peter Fenton said: 'There would be many in the congregation who owe a debt to Harry Boyle and I am one of them.'

Mr Boyle helped Mr Fenton research his book *Les Darcy, The Legend of the Fighting Man*. Reprinted with permission of the *Newcastle Herald* ©2006



Photo: Harry's immediate family escort the casket from St Joseph's Catholic Church East Maitland after the funeral service. Reprinted with permission of the *Newcastle Herald* ©2006

## HARRY BOYLE 1919-2005



*Herald* artist Peter Lewis' portrait sketch, now in the possession of Margaret Sivyler, appeared in the *Newcastle Herald* 5 December 2005 and is reproduced here by courtesy of Peter Lewis, the *Newcastle Herald* and Margaret Sivyler.

## Tributes from the *Maitland Mercury*, continued

The *Maitland Mercury* 2 December 2005 recorded Harry's funeral in a moving tribute by journalist Briony Sneddon, extracts of which are included here, with permission from the *Maitland Mercury*.

### MAN OF HISTORY FAREWELLED

About 400 people packed St Joseph's Church at East Maitland to farewell and honour the Wallalong resident widely recognised for his devotion to preserving the region's history.

His children Geoff Boyle and Elizabeth Foy, quoted Mr Boyle's adage to 'remember your past so you can build for the future but enjoy the present' in their tributes during the service.

'Although it is a sad day, smile for Dad and remember him as a man who was devoted to the city of Maitland and the Hunter Valley', said his daughter Elizabeth Foy.

Father Brian Mascord, who led the service, said it did not seem so long ago that the family lost Mr Boyle's wife of 60 years, Elsie.

'He was determined to do things his way – some people would say he was downright stubborn,' Father Mascord said.

### PETER FENTON'S POEM

Read by the author at the Funeral Service and reproduced here by courtesy of Peter Fenton

Harry Boyle was very special  
He was gentle, warm, but tough  
With a smile so full of mischief  
He was Irish sure enough  
You could sense the badge of courage  
That was hidden by his charm  
Never once he sat in judgement  
On the folk who did him harm.  
As a soldier in New Guinea  
Back in 1942  
He was ruthless and courageous  
As he did what he must do.  
Then he put the war behind him  
Breeding cattle on his stud  
He would never stray from Maitland  
For the town was in his blood.  
He became enthralled with Maitland  
And his zest would not abate  
As he chronicled the stories  
Of those folk who made it great.  
All those years he helped his  
colleagues  
Who would seek his expertise

Never basking in their glory  
Never sailing in their breeze.  
When I came in search of Darcy  
It was he who took me in  
He was thrilled each time he saw me  
It was though I was his kin.  
We would stand by Les' gravestone  
Or the plaque in Melbourne Street  
Eating lunch that Else had packed us  
Sweetened biscuits were my treat.  
When they built that mighty statue  
Harry's heart was filled with joy  
For the teenage boxing idol  
Was a simple farming boy.  
A humble man and courteous  
A lovely sense of fun  
Harry's handshake was a contract  
And you knew the deal was done.  
I have known some special people  
Some through sport and some through  
toil  
But I never met a finer man  
Than this man Harry Boyle

## Tributes from Paterson Historical Society

Mabs Keppie, member of Paterson Historical Society has selected two of Harry's articles from the *Maitland Mercury's* weekly series 'The Way We Were', which relate to the Paterson district. These are reproduced as a tribute to Harry's work by permission of Geoff Boyle and the *Maitland Mercury*.

### THE HISTORIC PATERSON RIVER UNCOVERED

Governor Macquarie stated that this was the most beautiful river he had ever travelled on.

The river that enthralled the Governor would have been vastly different from the river today.

For one thing there were no willow trees. Frederick Bedwell had not imported cuttings from Napoleon's tomb and probably not even thought of Australia then.

The stream would have been deep and unsilted, the banks lined by dense rainforest of cedar both red and white, huge figs, flooded gums, rosewoods, casuarinas and scrub trees linked together by vines. There would have been no manmade constructions to mar the beauty.

Birds of all description flocked in the trees – wonga, flock and top knot pigeons were in such numbers that they later became a marketable commodity.

Before discovery, this was the domain of the aboriginal Wanarua tribe, who seem to be from recorded accounts, a remarkable peaceful tribe. Perhaps they had no other option. The only recorded incidents were an attack on naturalist and botanist Robert Brown, when he was exploring the Paterson in 1804, and later a confrontation with Edward Goswyc Cory, when the tribe raided his corn.

The last of the Paterson River tribe, Scrammy Billy died in 1898.

The first explorers completely missed discovering the river, and Colonel Paterson never saw the river now named after him, but the second expedition minus the Colonel found it and called it the New River. Later it was known as the second branch of Hunter's River before becoming the Paterson River of today. Convict gangs were busy in the rainforest next to the river obtaining cedar and rosewood and they had their depot at Old Banks the forerunner to Paterson where there was a military barracks, courthouse and gallows.

This landscape was not to survive. Land settlement meant the clearing of the rainforest for crops and by 1823 there were 10 settlers residing namely Benjamin Davies, William Evans, John Swan, John Tucker Jnr., John Reynolds, Richard Binder, Robert Whitmore, Thomas Addison, Anthony Dwyer and John Powell. In 1833 the government answering a petition of settlers requiring a place to export produce, purchased an area to become today's Paterson. Old Banks was dismantled and by 1855 Paterson had four blacksmiths, three bootmakers, a tannery, two tailors, two butchers, four stores, two steam flour mills, five hotels and a shipyard. A truly prosperous village. It became famous as a producer of first class tobacco, of wine, Lindemans was founded here, of bacon and fruit.

The famous poem 'My Country' by Dorothea Mackellar was composed here and this narrow valley hemmed in by the Bundaluck, Wallarobba and Mount Royal Range has produced many outstanding citizens. It has also produced two outstanding unsolved murders, the Tocal murder and the Torryburn murder of John McIntyre.

Other areas became aware of the beauty of this river and as early as 1837 excursions started to view the attractions and continued almost up to the present day. Warwick

Harris with his shallow draught boats the *Lady Patina* and the *Lady Joy* took many tourists to Paterson wharf but siltation has now made that difficult.

This most beautiful river seems to attract the migratory birds and in spring and summer they are to be seen here together with the local flock are something for city folk to witness.

A small amount of dredging would enable these boats to operate again.



Photo: The riverside wharf at Paterson where district produce awaited the river steamboats that would convey the goods to markets.

Many people will recall Harry's entertaining narratives and tales as he led touring groups along the river by boat or coach, providing glimpses of the life and times of our forebears.

Reproduced from the collection of Paterson Historical Society

## SCENIC LOCAL RIVER NAMED AFTER GREAT EARLY EXPLORER

Our lovely scenic Paterson River, the lifeblood of a narrow fertile valley, had a incipient beginning in European history.

Known as Yimmang for thousands of years by the Aboriginal inhabitants it was completely missed by the first official party, which explored the river in 1801.

Theories have been advanced why this may have occurred, some feasible but unproven. A new one became evident in the last flood when debris choked the river from Hinton bridge to the confluence of the two rivers. This happens when the Hunter River floods and the Paterson does not.

It is known that the river was in fresh when the explorers ventured up it, many references being made to that fact. Something stopped them from recording a new deep navigable river.

Some months later the same party returned to do a more thorough survey without Colonel William Paterson and had no problem discovering the river, which they called the New River. Colonel Paterson never saw the river that is today named after him.

However he had been honoured by having the Hunter River of today from the junction at Raymond Terrace named after him. It had previously been called the Cedar Arm by Sydney traders. When the actual transfer of names occurred is not known but the Paterson River was for many years known as the second branch of Hunters River.

That the river was named after a worthy man is not disputed. Colonel Paterson was born on August 17, 1755, and from his youth developed an interest in botany and natural history. Lady Strathmore took an interest in him and became his patron. He entered the army at an early age and before entering on active duty he made a series of exploring expeditions in South Africa.

Early in 1777 he left England and arrived in Capetown. On October 16 he made his first exploration with Captain Gordon returning to Capetown on January 13, 1778. His second expedition lasted from May until December and his third exploration venture lasted from December 1778, until March, 1779. On his last trip he discovered and explored the district called Caffraria. His fourth and last exploration trip was from June to December, 1779. He made many fresh contributions to science and brought the first giraffe skin ever seen in England back with him. His discoveries made him the leading explorer of Africa and his researches are regarded in high terms by scientists.

He returned to England in October 1781, was gazetted to the 98<sup>th</sup> Regiment and went to India where he saw active service and was involved in the siege of Caroor in 1783. The 98<sup>th</sup> was disbanded in 1785 and on December 24 he was made lieutenant in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Foot. In June 1789 he was chosen to recruit and command the NSW Corp. He was made captain and having married brought his wife to the Colony in 1791. He was stationed at Norfolk Island until 1793.

In the same year he explored the Hawkesbury River and discovered the Grose River and many new species of plants. On the departure of Grose from the colony he became commander of the corps and acting Governor.

He was unfortunately wounded in a duel with McArthur. It was life threatening and he decided to return to England some time after. In the vicinity of Cape Horn he died and was buried at sea.

## HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS – HARRY’S INTERESTS

A selection of historic photographs donated to Paterson Historical Society by Harry Boyle that represent his special interests in this area



*Above* **Leehome – built 1884 – Woodville**

Harry’s memory recall and his ability to ‘read’ historic buildings were remarkable. Leehome and the Lee family were among the many favourite topics he shared with the Society



*Left* **James Leslie Darcy – 1895-1917**

Les Darcy was born at Woodville, one of a family of eleven. He defeated all contenders and was acknowledged undisputed world champion. Following his untimely death in the USA his body was returned to Australia and interred at East Maitland. Harry and his dedicated committee worked tirelessly to achieve the Les Darcy Memorial at East Maitland, unveiled in August 2000



*Right* **Francis Patrick Slavin – 1862-1930**

Born at The Brecon, Vacy, ‘Paddy’ Slavin rose to become a legendary figure on the world fistic front. On retirement from boxing Slavin became Sheriff of Dawson City in true western style. He is buried in Dawson City. Harry’s enthusiasm rekindled interest in the nearly forgotten bare-knuckle boxer. This resulted in the erection of the Slavin Memorial at Vacy, unveiled in 1998

*Below* Aborigine stone rubbings or axe sharpening grooves in a creek in the Paterson area. Many years ago Harry located this site and understood its significance.



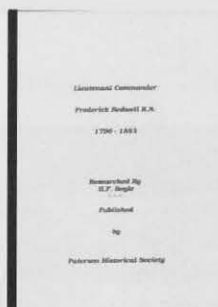
# PATERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

## BOOKS BY HARRY BOYLE

Harry wrote four significant books towards the Society's publications program

- *Lieutenant Commander Frederick Bedwell R.N. 1796-1853* published 1992
- *William Munnings Arnold 1819 -1875*, the inaugural society Heritage Address in 1993 published in 1994
- *George Boyle White 1802-1876*, the 1995 Heritage Address published that year
- *A Synopsis of the History of the Paterson River Valley* illustrated by Val Anderson also published in 1995

The following brief reviews have been written by member Sue Sokoloff



### **Lieutenant Commander Frederick Bedwell R.N. 1796 – 1853**

Following a successful career as a naval surveyor, FREDERICK BEDWELL became a landowner in the newly formed township of Paterson where he exercised a strong influence on early settlement. From 1817 he had surveyed much of the Australian coast arriving back in Sydney in 1822 having finally navigated the mainland. Legend has it that following a visit to St Helena, willow cuttings were taken from Napoleon's tomb, propagated at 'Valentia', his Paterson estate, slips of which, when reaching the main watercourse leaving a lasting memorial on the banks of the Paterson River.



### **William Munnings Arnold – 1819 – 1875**

Harry Boyle OAM presented the society's first Annual Heritage Address in April 1993, his subject, WILLIAM MUNNINGS ARNOLD of 'Stradbroke', one of the Hunter Valley's most historic farms. Arnold served with great distinction when he entered politics in 1856 representing the County of Durham in the Legislative Assembly holding many offices until November 1865 when he was appointed Secretary of Public Works and Lands. Later that year he became Speaker, a position he held unopposed until his tragic death when trying to retrieve pumpkins from the 1875 floodwaters at 'Stradbroke'. In 1844 Arnold married the second daughter of Rev JJ Smith, Anglican Rector of St Paul's Church, Paterson. There were nine children of this union.



### **George Boyle White – 1802 – 1876**

In this publication Harry gives an insight into the life's work of one of the colony's earliest surveyors, GEORGE BOYLE WHITE who came to Australia in 1826 as a young man. White's surveys were extremely important to the developing Hunter Valley often travelling across previously unsurveyed and difficult terrain. His extremes of highs and lows in his life as explorer, surveyor, landholder, farmer and vigneron have been overlooked by researchers but thanks to Harry this remarkable man's records have been set in history.



### **A Synopsis of the History of the Paterson River Valley**

In this vignette Harry has recorded names of early land grants, the grantees, historic churches, the agricultural development of the area and a brief reference to the life and achievements of Lieutenant Colonel William Paterson after whom the town, river and valley are named.

## PATERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY SOCIAL OUTINGS



Harry with his 'girls' celebrating his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 1999 at the Court House Museum.

L to R standing - Val Anderson, Kathy Lyall, Mabs Keppie, Esme Meehan, Val Webeck, Pam Sivyver,  
Seated - Pauline Clements, Harry, Mary Dunlop

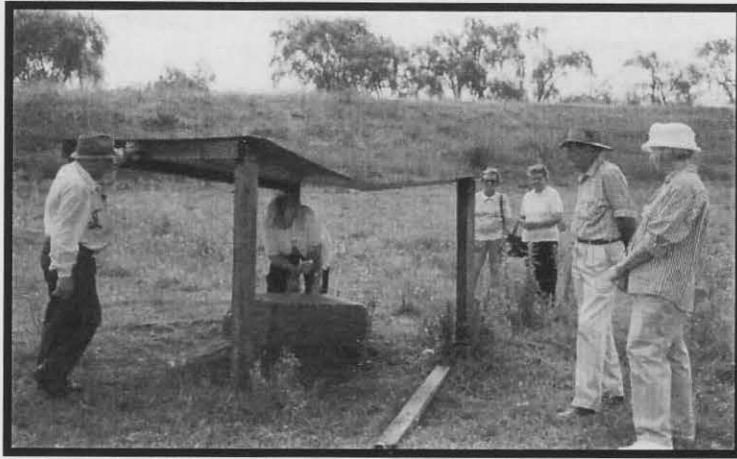


Visiting Bob and Paula Cameron's Pender designed home at Bolwarra in 1997

L to R - Paula Cameron, Val Anderson, Bill Keppie, Harry, Bob Cameron, Cynthia Hunter, Boris Sokoloff, Shirley Threlfo, Helen Masson, Jack Sullivan, Mabs Keppie, Sue Sokoloff



So typical of Harry! Four larrikins at the 1999 RAHS District Conference held in Paterson School of Arts Hall. L to R - Harry, Bill Anderson, Magistrate Rex Meehan, Jack Sullivan



A visit to King Tom's 1875 Gravesite Bolwarra in 1997.  
L to R - Harry, Val Anderson, Mabs Keppie, Shirley Threlfo, Bill Keppie, Cynthia Hunter



At historic Merton Cottage Denman in 1995.  
L to R - Harry, Boris Sokoloff, Mabs & Bill Keppie, Jack Sullivan, Val Anderson, June and Mac Mayne, Sue Sokoloff, Bill and Cynthia Hunter



At the launching of the Manchester Unity Lodge Banner in 1997 at the Paterson Court House Museum.  
L to R - Harry, Cameron Archer, Allan Fairhall, Wilf Watts, Elsie Boyle, Perry Landy



Christmas celebrations at the museum in 2004.

L to R - Mary Dunlop, Boris Sokoloff, Cameron Archer, Harry, Pauline Clements.



Three Wise Men!

L to R - Bill Keppie, Harry and Cameron Archer at the society's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations



Cameron was determined to get Harry 'on the river' - one last time - and yes, Harry did fall in getting out of the tinnie. Photo taken at 'Glendarra' in 2005.

Val Anderson, Harry, Sue Sokoloff and Cameron Archer

Photos by Boris Sokoloff and Bill Anderson  
These photos have been selected by Mary Dunlop

## THE DOROTHEA MACKELLAR – ‘MY COUNTRY’ - PATERSON VALLEY CONNECTION EXHIBIT PATERSON COURT HOUSE MUSEUM, 1996

For some time our good friend Harry Boyle OAM had been concerned that the Mackellar family's connection with the 'Torryburn' Estate in the Gresford district, in particular Dorothea Mackellar's strong association with the writing of her famous Australian poem 'My Country' was at risk of being overlooked and possibly forgotten. During Heritage Week in 1996, with Harry's encouragement our society assembled an exhibition to serve as a permanent record of the Mackellar ties with the Paterson Valley.

In 1997 a publication, as a record of the exhibition was sponsored by the 1997 Bicentenary Events Corporation and Prime Television. Since that time the exhibition has created much interest and won wide appeal.

It has fulfilled the society's aim, that is to establish without any doubt the rightful place of the Dorothea Mackellar – 'My Country' – Paterson Valley Connection in Australian history – all thanks to our Harry!

Val Anderson



Combined Annual Heritage Walk and Dorothea Mackellar Book Launch.  
Paterson Court House Museum – 16 March 1997

Back Row: Mardi Ryan, Bicentennial Committee – Enid Stubbins, Dungog Historical Society – Hazel Hancock, Gresford Historical Society – Jack Sullivan, Historian – Harry Boyle OAM, Historian – Cameron Archer, President, Paterson Historical Society.

Front Row: Val Anderson, Author of Mackellar book launched, Paterson Historical Society – Cynthia Hunter, Historian – Sr Adrienne Howley, Dorothea Mackellar biographer and Nurse-Companion.

Photo by Bill Anderson records the principal people involved with research for the Dorothea Mackellar book and exhibition

## Harry's Tribute to Les Darcy

Peter Fenton's tribute poem to Harry Boyle, read at his funeral service on 2/12/2005, arose from his acquaintance with Harry over many years but was especially forged during the years when Fenton was researching and writing his book *Les Darcy the Legend of the Fighting Man*, which was published in 1995 and the subsequent TV documentary *The Maitland Wonder* first shown in 1998.

The 28<sup>th</sup> October 1995 was the centenary of the birth of Les Darcy and no less than three books about the great fighter were published that year. Fenton's book was acknowledged as being a vivid portrayal of the young man and the times in which he lived as he pursued his career in the ring and attempted to succeed on the world stage.

Harry was concerned that the centenary of Les Darcy's birth was likely to pass in Les' hometown of Maitland without any significant commemoration being made. The only activities planned were a church service and a feature article in the newspaper. In early October he wrote letters to the *Mercury* and contacted the council, councillors and others about this lack of recognition of Maitland's legendary boxer. The centenary passed but the seeds were then sown for a project to raise funds to erect a life-size bronze statue of Les Darcy in a prominent spot in Maitland. By 1997 this plan was launched and underway. A photo of the fighter in a boxing stance was selected, artist Tanya Bartlett chosen for the work and a great fund raising effort started.



*Left: Peter Fenton, presenter of the documentary *The Maitland Wonder* with Harry Boyle and specialist documentary film maker Don Featherstone in High Street Maitland December 1997. Maitland Mercury photo*

About this time Peter Fenton made an hour-long documentary film about Les called *The Maitland Wonder*. Fenton travelled to the United States to trace the Darcy story there as well as in Sydney where many important fights were staged. Harry assisted Peter in his researches into Les' life in the Maitland area and the documentary features segments of the interview with Harry. The filming in Maitland was done in December 1997. The documentary was premiered in Maitland Town Hall in October 1998 and then on ABC TV for the 103<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Les' birth.

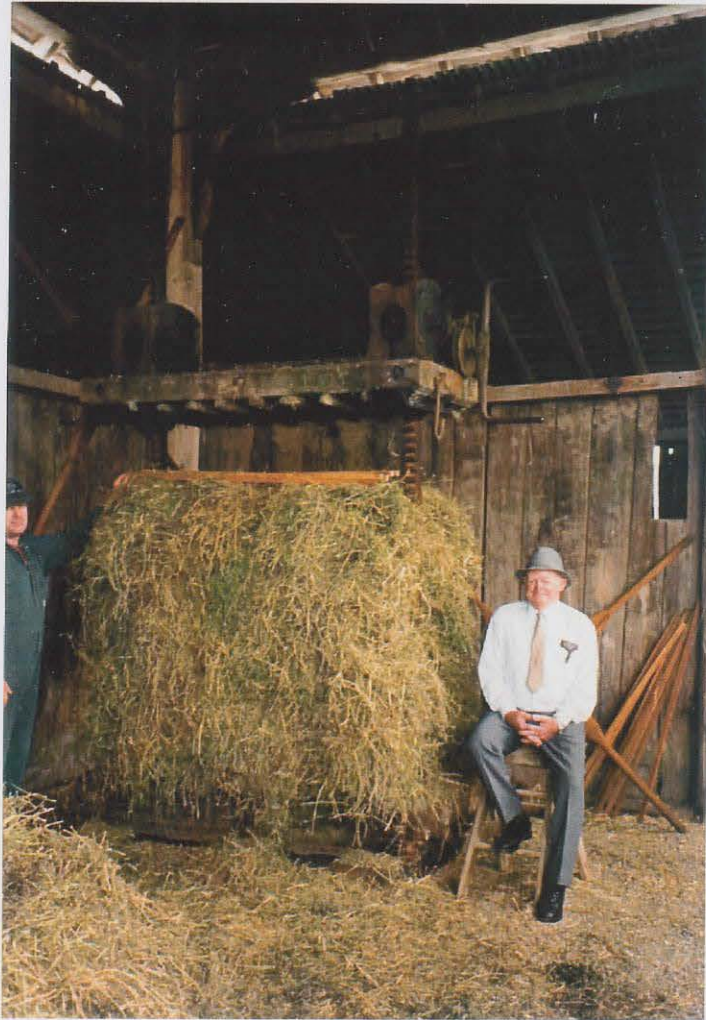
Harry was a particularly proud Maitlander when the Les Darcy statue in King Edward Park East Maitland was unveiled in August 2000.

Cynthia Hunter

## HARRY'S FINAL WORDS

HENRY FRANCIS BOYLE OAM

'Harry'



*'Remember your past so you can build for the future but enjoy the present'*  
Harry

Photo by Bill Anderson, of Harry in the c.1868 Blacket Barn at Tocal,  
Tocal Foundation Day 1997

## RECORD YOUR MEMORIES



When Federal Treasurer Peter Costello came to Maitland in September 2006 to participate in the Lifeskills Trade Fair and Technology Quest at the former Walka Water Works he recommended that the innovative financial literacy program pioneered by East Maitland Public School teacher Steve O'Mara be implemented in schools across Australia. The Treasurer, Peter Costello, is photographed here with Margaret Sivyer holding a five mutual note, which features a profile portrait of the late Harry Boyle. Maitland Mutual Building Society has given the program great support and encouragement.

*Maitland Mercury 20 and 27 Sept 2006*

**THIS ALBUM OF TRIBUTES WAS LAUNCHED AT THE PATERSON  
COURT HOUSE MUSEUM**

**25 NOVEMBER 2006**

An Album of Tributes  
Henry Francis Boyle  
Soldier - Farmer - His  
Henry Boyle at ease on  
veranda of Berry House  
one of the Eales family  
homes at Duckenfield  
near Morpeth, N.S.W.  
Hunter Valley pioneer  
John Eales and the  
Eales



ISBN - 0 9758491 2 3

Published by Paterson Historical Society Inc 2006  
with financial assistance from  
Maitland Mutual Building Society Limited



TANILBA HOUSE - TANILBA BAY



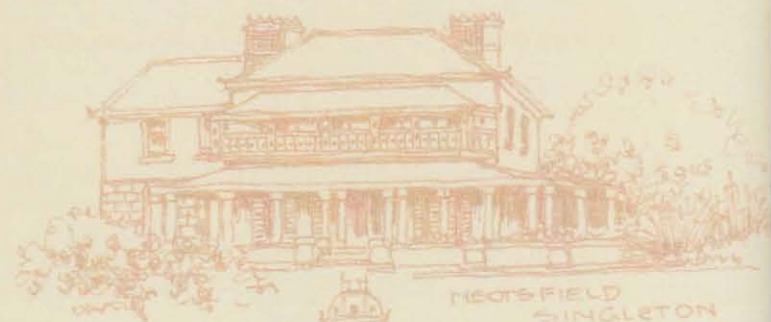
MERTON - DENHAM



BARONA  
SINGLTON



EDINGLASSIE  
MUSWELLBROOK



NEOTSFIELD  
SINGLTON



MINIMBAH  
SINGLTON



DUCKENFIELD - MORPETH



BELLTRESS  
SCONE